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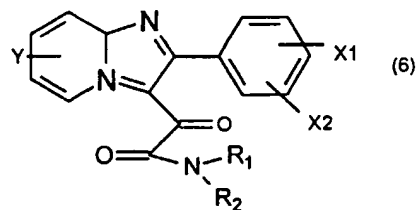
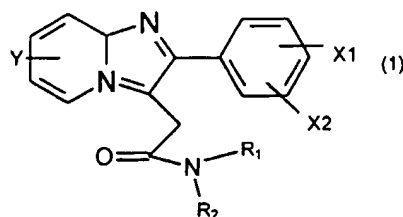
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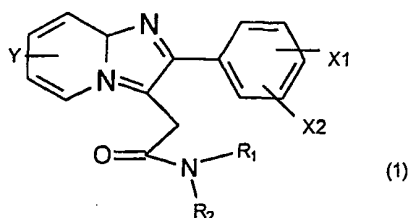
(54) Title: PROCESS FOR THE PREPARATION OF IMIDAZOPYRIDINES



(57) Abstract: A compound of general formula (1), in which Y denotes hydrogen, a halogen or a C<sub>1-4</sub> alkyl group X<sub>1</sub> and X<sub>2</sub> denote, independently of each other, hydrogen, a halogen or a C<sub>1-4</sub> alkoxy, C<sub>1-6</sub> alkyl, CF<sub>3</sub>, CH<sub>3</sub>S CH<sub>3</sub>SO<sub>2</sub> or NO<sub>2</sub> group and R<sub>1</sub> and R<sub>2</sub> denote independently of each other, hydrogen or a C<sub>1-3</sub> alkyl group, with the proviso that R<sub>1</sub> and R<sub>2</sub> do not both denote hydrogen, or a salt thereof is prepared by a multi-step process, the last step of which comprises reducing a compound of general formula (6), in which Y, X<sub>1</sub>, X<sub>2</sub>, R<sub>1</sub> and R<sub>2</sub> are as defined above with an appropriate reducing agent, such as Zn, and, if desired, converting the compound of formula (1) thus obtained, into a salt. The product of this process are known to have useful pharmacological properties, e.g. as anxiolytics.

## PROCESS FOR THE PREPARATION OF IMIDAZOPYRIDINES

The present invention relates to a process for preparing imidazopyridines of the general formula (1)



in which:

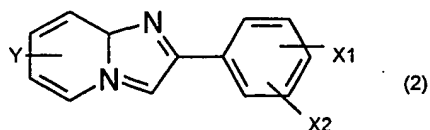
Y denotes hydrogen, a halogen or a C<sub>1-4</sub> alkyl group,  
X<sub>1</sub> and X<sub>2</sub> denote, independently of each other, hydrogen, a halogen or a C<sub>1-4</sub> alkoxy, C<sub>1-6</sub> alkyl, CF<sub>3</sub>, CH<sub>3</sub>S, CH<sub>3</sub>SO<sub>2</sub> or NO<sub>2</sub> group and

R<sub>1</sub> and R<sub>2</sub> denote, independently of each other, hydrogen or a C<sub>1-5</sub> alkyl group, with the proviso that R<sub>1</sub> and R<sub>2</sub> do not both denote hydrogen, or salts thereof.

The products of this process are known to have useful pharmacological properties, e.g. as anxiolytics, see European Patent No. 0 050 563. A process for preparing compounds of formula 1 is described in US Patent No. 4,794,185, Dec. 12, 1988.

The present invention relates to a more efficient process for preparing compounds of formula (1).

In accordance with the present invention, compounds of the general formula (1) can be prepared by reacting a compound of the general formula (2)



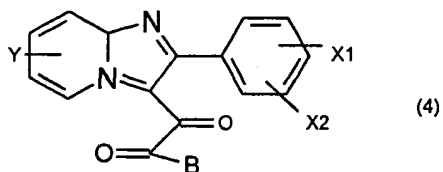
in which Y, X<sub>1</sub> and X<sub>2</sub>, are as defined above  
with a compound of the general formula (3)



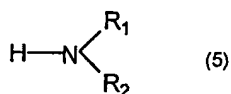
in which:

A denotes a halogen and B denotes a halogen, a C<sub>1-4</sub> alkoxy group or an NR<sub>1</sub>R<sub>2</sub> group in which R<sub>1</sub> and R<sub>2</sub> are as defined above

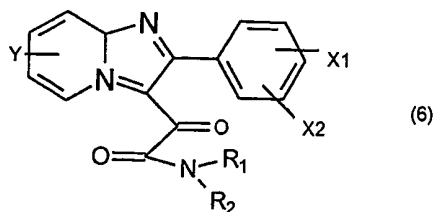
to form a compound of the general formula (4)



in which Y, X<sub>1</sub>, X<sub>2</sub> and B are as defined above,  
and, if B denotes a halogen or a C<sub>1-4</sub> alkoxy group, reacting  
the compound of the general formula (4) with a compound of  
the general formula (5)



in which R<sub>1</sub> and R<sub>2</sub> are as defined above to form a compound  
of the general formula (6)



in which Y, X<sub>1</sub>, X<sub>2</sub>, R<sub>1</sub> and R<sub>2</sub> are as defined above.

To form a compound of formula (1), the compound of formula (6) can be treated with a reducing agent. If desired, the compound of formula (1) thus obtained is converted into a salt.

It will be appreciated that if in formula (3) B denotes an NR<sub>1</sub>R<sub>2</sub> group in which R<sub>1</sub> and R<sub>2</sub> are as defined above, compound (6) instead of compound (4) is formed directly by reaction of compound (2) with compound (3).

As set forth above compound (6) is prepared by reacting an imidazopyridine of formula (2) with an oxalic acid derivative of formula (3). This reaction is conveniently carried out in an aprotic organic solvent, for example n-hexane, cyclohexane, acetonitrile, acetone, ethylacetate, toluene, methyl tert. butyl ether or mixtures of these solvents, preferably a mixture of cyclohexane with toluene, at a temperature range from 0-100° C, preferably from 0-10°C, and in the presence of an organic base, for example tertiary alkylamines, pyridine or substituted pyridines, preferably pyridine. If in formula (3) B denotes a halogen or a C<sub>1-4</sub> alkoxy group, the product (4) thus obtained is subsequently reacted with a primary or secondary amine of formula (5), conveniently at a temperature range from 0-100°C, preferably from 30-40°C. If in formula (3) B denotes an NR<sub>1</sub>R<sub>2</sub> group, the reaction of compound (2) with compound (3) directly yields a compound of formula (6) instead of compound (4), and no intervening treatment with a compound of formula (5) is necessary.

The compound of formula (6) thus obtained is then reacted with an appropriate reducing agent to form compound (1). This reaction is conveniently carried out in a polar aprotic solvent, for example pyridine, dimethylformamide or acetonitrile, preferably pyridine, in the presence of an organic acid, for example acetic acid, formic acid or toluenesulfonic acid, preferably acetic acid, and of an acylating agent, for example acetic anhydride or acetylchloride, preferably acetic anhydride, at a temperature range from 25-75°C, preferably from 50-55°C. A suitable reducing agent is, for example, Zn.

The compounds of the general formula (6) and their preparation also form part of the present invention.

The following examples illustrate the invention in greater detail.

#### EXAMPLE 1

Preparation of 6-methyl-N,N-dimethyl-2-(4-methylphenyl)imidazo[1,2-a]pyridine-3-glyoxyacetamide, compound (6)

To a slurry of 10.0 g (45 mmol) of 6-methyl-N,N-dimethyl-2-(4-methylphenyl)imidazo[1,2-a]pyridine in a mixture of 20.0 g of toluene and 28.0 g of cyclohexane were added 8.6 (0.068 mmol) of oxalylchloride within 15 minutes at 0-5°C. 3.6 g (45 mmol) of pyridine were added within 5 minutes at 0-5°C. The resulting slurry was heated to 65-70°C and stirred for 2 hours. Then it was cooled to 30-35°C and 8.4 g (187 mmol) of dimethylamine were introduced. To the slurry were added 26.0 g of water and 2.3 g of isopropanol. The product was isolated by filtration to afford the title compound in 80 % yield.

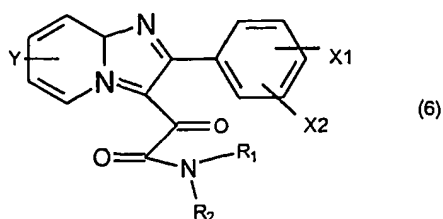
EXAMPLE 2

Preparation of N,N-dimethyl-2-[6-methyl-2-(4-methylphenyl)imidazo[1,2-a]pyridine-3-yl]acetamide, compound (1)

To a slurry of 150.0 g (0.467 mol) of 6-methyl-N,N-dimethyl-2-(4-methylphenyl)imidazo[1,2-a]pyridine-3-glyoxyacetamide and 105.0 g (1.605 mol) of zinc powder in 443.0 g of pyridine was added a solution of 94.0 g (0.920 mol) of acetic anhydride in 472.5 g of acetic acid within 20 - 25 minutes at a temperature below 45°C. The suspension was then heated to 50-55°C and stirred for 25-30 hours. Unreacted zinc was filtered off and the filtrate was subjected to a vacuum distillation. To the remaining oil 455.0 g of 25% aqueous ammonia solution were added. The precipitated solid was collected by filtration and purified by recrystallization in 800.0 g of methylisobutylketone. The title compound was afforded in 65.6 % yield.

CLAIMS:

1. A process for preparing compounds of the general formula (6)



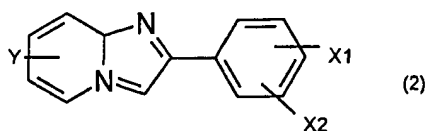
in which:

Y denotes hydrogen, a halogen or a C<sub>1-4</sub> alkyl group.

X<sub>1</sub> and X<sub>2</sub> denote, independently of each other, hydrogen, a halogen or a C<sub>1-4</sub> alkoxy, C<sub>1-6</sub> alkyl, CF<sub>3</sub>, CH<sub>3</sub>S, CH<sub>3</sub>SO<sub>2</sub> or NO<sub>2</sub> group and

R<sub>1</sub> and R<sub>2</sub> denote, independently of each other, hydrogen or a C<sub>1-5</sub> alkyl group, with the proviso that R<sub>1</sub> and R<sub>2</sub> do not both denote hydrogen,

which process comprises reacting a compound of the general formula (2)



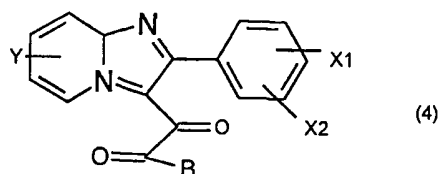
in which Y, X<sub>1</sub> and X<sub>2</sub>, are as defined above  
with a compound of the general formula (3)



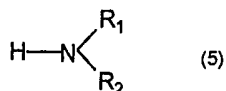
in which:

A denotes a halogen and B denotes a halogen, a C<sub>1-4</sub> alkoxy group or an NR<sub>1</sub>R<sub>2</sub> group in which R<sub>1</sub> and R<sub>2</sub> are as defined above

to form a compound of the general formula (4)

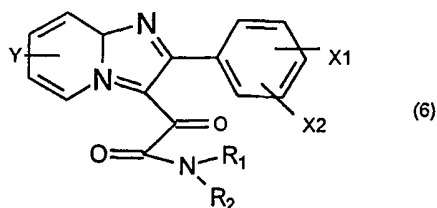


in which Y, X<sub>1</sub>, X<sub>2</sub> and B are as defined above and, if B denotes a halogen or a C<sub>1-4</sub> alkoxy group, reacting the compound of formula (4) with a compound of the general formula (5)



in which R<sub>1</sub> and R<sub>2</sub> are as defined above.

2. A compound of the general formula (6)



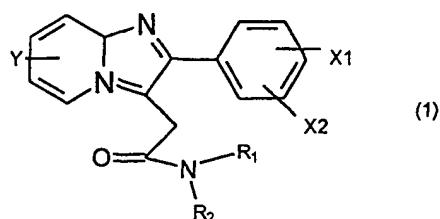
in which:

Y denotes hydrogen, a halogen or a C<sub>1-4</sub> alkyl group  
X<sub>1</sub> and X<sub>2</sub> denote, independently of each other, hydrogen, a halogen or a C<sub>1-4</sub> alkoxy, C<sub>1-6</sub> alkyl, CF<sub>3</sub>, CH<sub>3</sub>S, CH<sub>3</sub>SO<sub>2</sub> or NO<sub>2</sub> group and



$R_1$  and  $R_2$  denote independently of each other, hydrogen or a  $C_{1-5}$  alkyl group, with the proviso that  $R_1$  and  $R_2$  do not both denote hydrogen.

3. A process for preparing a compound of the general formula (1)



in which:

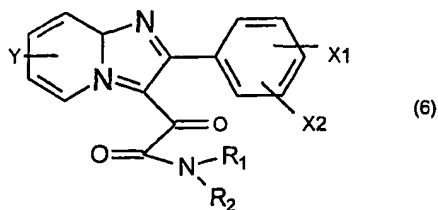
Y denotes hydrogen, a halogen or a  $C_{1-4}$  alkyl group

$X_1$  and  $X_2$  denote, independently of each other, hydrogen, a halogen or a  $C_{1-4}$  alkoxy,  $C_{1-6}$  alkyl,  $CF_3$ ,  $CH_3S$ ,  $CH_3SO_2$  or  $NO_2$  group and

$R_1$  and  $R_2$  denote independently of each other, hydrogen or a  $C_{1-5}$  alkyl group, with the proviso that  $R_1$  and  $R_2$  do not both denote hydrogen,

or a salt thereof

which process comprises reducing a compound of the general formula (6)



in which Y,  $X_1$ ,  $X_2$ ,  $R_1$  and  $R_2$  are as defined above with an appropriate reducing agent and, if desired, converting the compound of formula (1) thus obtained into a salt.

4. A process according to claim 3 wherein the reducing agent is Zn .

5. A process according to claim 3 or claim 4 wherein the reduction is carried out in pyridine, dimethylformamide, dimethylacetamide, acetonitrile or a derivative of any of these, in the presence of acetic acid, formic acid or toluenesulfonic acid and of an acylating agent.

6. A process according to claim 5 wherein the acylating agent is acetic anhydride or acetylchloride.

## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Intern Application No

PCT/EP 00/08021

## A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC 7 C07D401/04 A61K31/437 A61P25/22 //(C07D401/04,235:00,  
221:00)

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

## B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 7 C07D

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the International search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

CHEM ABS Data, EPO-Internal, PAJ, WPI Data

## C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	US 4 382 938 A (KAPLAN JEAN-PIERRE ET AL) 10 May 1983 (1983-05-10) column 2, reaction scheme column 9, Table, compounds 91, 92 claim 1 & EP 0 050 563 A 28 April 1982 (1982-04-28) cited in the application -----	1-6
A	US 4 794 185 A (ROSSEY GUY ET AL) 27 December 1988 (1988-12-27) column 2, line 1 - line 3 column 7, Appendix claims -----	1-6

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.☒ Patent family members are listed in annex.

## \* Special categories of cited documents:

\*A\* document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance

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\*P\* document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

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\*X\* document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

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Date of the actual completion of the international search

25 April 2001

Date of mailing of the international search report

08/05/2001

Name and mailing address of the ISA

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# INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International Application No

PCT/EP 00/08021

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